

An eye to the future:

The South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles moves towards implementing portal for
vision screening results

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On October 1, 2020, thousands of South Carolinians may be stuck at airport checkpoints, security entrances of federal building, and military installations across the country when the Federal REAL ID Act of 2005 goes into effect. Additionally, that same day, Act #220 of 2018 (see Appendix A) requires all South Carolinians to have an updated vision screening on file with the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV) or take a vision screening in person in order to renew their driver's licenses. When these two events collide, purchasing a REAL ID may immediately become more challenging for South Carolinians eligible to purchase theirs online unless they visit an eye care professional and have those vision screening results electronically submitted to the agency. If a customer is eligible for purchasing his or her REAL ID license online, it functions as renewing his or her driver's license, so the requirements for renewal hold true.

Problem Statement

For my Certified Public Manager project, I chose to focus on the implementation of Act #220 since it impacts the SCDMV and state at a time when another huge nationwide change, REAL ID, will do the same.

When the General Assembly passed and Governor Henry McMaster signed into law Act #6 of 2017 (Appendix B) which required the state's compliance with REAL ID, it also repealed the requirement for South Carolinians to have their vision screened when renewing their driver's licenses at SCDMV branches across the state. The law, however, maintained the need for South Carolinians to have their vision screened upon initial issuance of a driver's license and other instances of commercial driver's license-issuance, which are issued under federal guidelines set by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), a subsidiary of the US Department of Transportation. Repealing the need for South Carolinians to have their vision

screened at license renewal allowed the SCDMV to implement a strategy for online driver's license renewal and, therefore, online issuance of REAL ID licenses for eligible South Carolinians.

A year later, however, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed into law Act #220 of 2018. This law reintroduced the requirement for South Carolinians to have their vision screened or submit a no-more-than-year-old statement from a licensed eye care professional saying their eyes have been screened within the past 12 months, which was also standard practice prior to Act #6 of 2017, in order to renew their driver's licenses. However, Act #220 created the mandatory requirement that optometrists and ophthalmologists execute electronically, "A Certificate of Vision Examination...transmitted to the department...pursuant to its electronic specifications" (SC Code of Law §56-1-220(B) effective October 1, 2020). The language of this Act maintains the SCDMV's ability to issue driver's licenses remotely at a time when that capability is needed most, however, that statement is only made true if a South Carolinian has visited his or her eye care professional.

The focus of this project is the creation of the electronic portal to electronically transmit vision screening results to the SCDMV in order to continue allowing South Carolinians the ability to renew their driver's license online at SCDMVonline.com. While the portal will not be fully implemented by the due date of this project, there is enough data, stakeholder engagement, and conversations about the potentials of this portal to conduct a viable study.

In Fiscal Year 2018-2019's SCDMV Accountability Report, the agency listed "modernize customer delivery service methods" as its second measurable goal. Related strategies included: increase amount of service available online, secure legislative support for modernization and efficiency efforts, and leverage partnerships for deliverability of products and

services (Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Accountability Report). Implementing an electronic portal for the transmission of vision screening results aligns with this goal and these strategies.

Particularly, the project primarily aligns with two of these three strategies: increasing amount of services available online and securing legislative support for modernization and efficiency efforts. Secondary alignment, however, is seen with goal one, “Deliver an excellent customer service experience while upholding the existing laws that govern agency operations.”

The existing problem is that no electronic portal currently exists for the SCDMV to be compliant with Act #220 of 2018 and online driver’s license renewal applications may decrease dramatically without a robust communication plan relaying the importance of visiting an eye care professional if desiring to renew online.

Data Collection

The majority of data used throughout this report comes from the SCDMV’s Phoenix computer system. Phoenix is the driver’s license and vehicle record database the agency uses to maintain customer records. To collect data, I asked a colleague who is a statistician to query Phoenix for how many customers renewed their driver’s license in person, online, and by mail dating back to Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015). Furthermore, data related to the number of optometrists in the state comes from the South Carolina Optometric Physicians Association (SCOPA). While there is another association that represents ophthalmologists, there is no data in this report from that entity. Both the South Carolina Society of Ophthalmology and SCOPA are represented as stakeholders in ongoing discussions regarding the electronic portal’s development.

Using the data collection methods described above, I was able to deduce how many South Carolinians would be expected to renew their driver's licenses in the coming years. This equates to how many South Carolinians must either submit to a vision screening at an SCDMV branch in the coming years or visit a licensed eye care professional to complete his or her vision screening and have the results submitted the agency electronically in order to complete a driver's license renewal online beginning October 1, 2020.

Data Analysis

Between July 1, 2015 and December 12, 2019, 3,270,722 identification cards, beginner's permits, driver's licenses, commercial learner's permits, commercial driver's licenses, moped operator's licenses, conditional provisional driver's licenses, and special restricted driver's licenses have been renewed in South Carolina (Appendix C). For the purpose of this analysis, 600,731 of the total number above will not be considered. That total represents identification cards renewed since July 1, 2015. Since identification cards do not carry driving privileges, people who carry an identification card are not subject to a vision screening when renewing the card. With this in mind, this analysis will focus on the 2,669,991 cards that carry some type of operation or driving privilege.

Customers who have renewed non-commercial driver's licenses during or after July 2017 have not been subject to a vision screening when they renew their license. Customers who have renewed commercial driver's licenses or learner's permits, regardless of time period, continue to be subject to a vision screening when they renew their licenses. For this reason, 105,462 of the 2,669,991 cards that carry some type of operation or driving privilege will not be considered for this analysis. This number represents the total number of commercial learner's permits or commercial driver's licenses renewed during the time period above. With this in mind, the

analysis will focus on 2,564,529 non-commercial driver's licenses that were renewed during the specified time period.

While Act #6 of 2017 took effect in April 2017, SCDMV documentation (Operational Newsbreak Volume 14, Number 20) (Appendix D) reflects the change itself was not fully implemented until two months later. Because of this, for the purpose of this analysis, the 2,564,529 renewals will be separated into two categories separated based on before and after the start of Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017).

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, 1,436,147 beginner's permits, driver's license, moped operator's licenses, conditional provisional driver's licenses, and special restricted driver's licenses were renewed in SCDMV branches or via SCDMV's mail-in process (beginner's permits, driver's licenses, or moped operator's licenses only). These individuals would have been subject to a vision screening or had to submit Report of Vision Screening for Non-Commercial Beginner Permits or Driver's Licenses (SCDMV Form 412-NC) (Appendix E) with their renewal application to show their vision was screened within the previous 12 months.

Between July 1, 2017 and December 12, 2019, the time period for which data is available for the purpose of this project, 1,128,382 driving-related cards have been renewed in an SCDMV branch, via the agency's mail-in process, or online. The online renewal process was not available until after Act #6 of 2017 since the vision screening was required as part of the renewal process. Since the Act repealed the need for a vision screening, the SCDMV could begin offering online driver's license renewal. Currently, customers do not have to submit a form stating their vision was screened within the past 12 months nor submit to a vision screening at an SCDMV branch if renewing in person. Without the repeal of the vision screening, hundreds of thousands of South

Carolínians eligible for purchasing their REAL ID license online would have to visit the agency in person.

Based on the numbers above, the SCDMV renewed an average of 51,808 driving-related cards per month between July 1, 2015 and December 12, 2019. When Act #220 of 2018 takes effect October 1, 2020, these individuals will be required to visit an eye care professional who must transmit their screening results to the SCDMV electronically in order to renew their driver's license online. If an individual does not have a vision screening on file, he or she must visit an SCDMV branch to renew his or her license in person. Since the introduction of online renewals during Fiscal Year 2018, 142,826 people have used this method to renew their license. Only United States Citizens who hold a regular passenger driver's license are eligible for this method.

Unless people who renew their driver's license online visit an eye care professional before attempting to complete that transaction with the SCDMV, these individuals must visit one of the SCDMV's 67 branches to renew in person beginning October 1, 2020. Additionally, the more than 400,000 South Carolínians who are eligible to purchase their REAL ID online before October 1, 2020 will become ineligible to do so unless they visit an eye care professional first to have their vision screening results transmitted to the agency electronically. This alone could put hundreds of thousands of South Carolínians back inside SCDMV branches at a time when capacity is already expected to surge due to the federal implementation date of the REAL ID Act.

Implementation Plan

In order to implement the electronic portal to transmit vision screening results to the SCDMV, agency stakeholders are partnering with South Carolina Interactive (SCI) to build the transaction. The total cost of the portal is anticipated to be \$48,075.00. Meanwhile, SCDMV staff members are working with eye care professional associations, as well as the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (SCLLR) to gain their input in the process. While an SCI programmer is building the majority of the platform, other stakeholders include the SCDMV's Information Technology, Driver Services, Policy and Procedure, and Communications offices.

For a successful implementation by October 1, 2020, the SCDMV first defined the instances that the vision portal would be used. Since the creation of the portal was in state law, there was limited leeway here to change the scope of the system itself. Additionally, staff members from SCI and SCLLR are working together to create a real-time license status check of eye care professionals in the state to ensure that those entering data into the portal have an active credential to practice. Since the electronic portal will more than likely mimic the SCDMV's current Report of Vision Screening for Non-Commercial Beginner Permits or Driver's Licenses (SCDMV Form 412-NC), there is not much to design as far as the portal itself. There were some decisions, however, to be made concerning South Carolinians who did not yet have a driver's license in the SCDMV's system, yet they wanted to report their vision screening to the SCDMV electronically.

With a driver's license number, it is easy to "ping" Phoenix to confirm whether or not that individual has an active license with the SCDMV. Without a license number, however, that becomes more challenging. Because of this, and with the desire to expand the use of the portal as

much as possible within the confines of the law, SCDMV Information Technology staff and SCI decided the portal could capture vision screening results with a social security number in addition to a driver's license number. If a 14-year-old, for example, was visiting his or her eye care professional six months before applying for a beginner's permit, his or her vision screening could be transmitted to the SCDMV using the applicant's social security number and retrieved from the portal to Phoenix once the teenager was at an SCDMV office completing his or her transaction for a beginner's permit.

The primary action steps to complete the goal have to do with communication between the SCDMV, eye care professionals, and the public. There are a number of obstacles presented with this piece of the project. First, without the final implementation date of the vision screening portal, it is difficult to begin communicating to the public that this option must occur if interested in renewing a license online.

Developers at SCI have told the SCDMV that the electronic portal may be operational within four months of the technical specifications being completed, so there is a potential for it to be completed before October 1, 2020. The law, however, does not mandate its use until October 1, 2020, so even if the portal is available before then, eye care professionals do not have to start entering data into it. To overcome this obstacle, the SCDMV must work to complete the technical specifications sooner rather than later to "standup" the portal before October 1, 2020. If that occurs, communication that tells the public to ask their eye care professional to transmit their vision screening electronically to the SCDMV can begin.

At the same time, the SCDMV is working with eye care professionals to integrate the question, "Does your driver's license expire within the next 12 months?" into its patient questionnaires. This question, along with, "If so, would you like for this practice to transmit your

vision screening results to the SCDMV so you can renew your license online?” and a “yes” or “no” box, would likely greatly increase the number of South Carolinians able to continue using the online license renewal function currently offered from the SCDMV. The challenge, however, is that the SCDMV cannot mandate eye care professionals include this language on their questionnaires, so there is an even heavier reliance on proactive communication that empowers the patient to ask his or her eye care professional to submit the vision screening results to the SCDMV.

This education campaign will be a challenging endeavor for the SCDMV since continuing to educate citizens on the need for a REAL ID concurrently occurs. Separating the two topics: REAL ID and the re-introduction of a vision screening at renewal in organic or paid advertising may be confusing for the layman. To overcome this, the SCDMV must leverage existing resources and new resources well. For example, the SCDMV currently advertises with a number of statewide and local entities for REAL ID. The SCDMV must integrate the vision screening piece back into the conversation of its advertisements in order to maintain the truth that “some people may be able to purchase their REAL ID license online.” Further, the SCDMV should explore opportunities to partner with eye care professionals statewide by sharing the message that the agency agrees you must see in order to be able to drive and also there is a new mechanism in place that accomplishes that while not requiring you to visit an SCDMV branch to renew your license.

Since SCDMV branches will offer a vision screening in person via its orthotors and the framework for fitting this step into a customer service representative’s workflow already exists, there is no need to greatly change standard operating procedures (SOP) for in-person visits. The largest change in SOP may come with eye care professionals. The SCDMV suggests eye care

professionals integrate into their SOP the questions mentioned above regarding license expiration and renewal timeframes when completing exams on patients. Further, eye care professionals must integrate into their SOP the actual data entry into the vision screening portal. Since the portal will be a username and password-protected system, as well as check to confirm licensure status with SCLLR prior to submission, eye care professionals must determine at which point in their workflow are they inputting data into the portal to maintain the online renewal function for some of their patients.

Evaluation Method

Since the vision screening portal is not yet implemented, it is difficult to currently evaluate its success. There are two time periods the SCDMV must be cognizant of once the portal is live. First, if the vision screening portal is live before October 1, 2020, the SCDMV must begin immediately educating South Carolinians on this availability of this portal so they are informed when visiting their eye care professional. In its messaging, the SCDMV must first remind citizens that vision screening results are only good for one year, so if they are visiting an eye care professional and not yet ready to renew their driver's license, or purchase a REAL ID since an existing South Carolinian with a license who switches to a REAL ID is also considered a license renewal, there is not a necessity to transmit the vision screening results to the SCDMV. However, the SCDMV should consider not getting this detailed in its messaging since that will introduce an additional layer of confusion to the average citizen.

Secondly, come October 1, 2020, the SCDMV must evaluate the success of the portal and its messaging by watching branch office wait times, in-person renewal numbers, and online renewal numbers. The difficult piece here, however, is since REAL ID becomes law on October 1, 2020, the SCDMV must work to separate a customer rush due to REAL ID versus a customer

rush due to the re-introduction of the vision screening at license renewal. Particularly online, if there is a large decrease in the number of customers able to complete transactions online, the SCDMV will be able to adjust its messaging campaign to encourage people to visit an eye care professional in order to maintain that functionality.

More than 142,000 people have renewed their driver's license online since the SCDMV introduced that transaction in 2018. Of the 142,826 people who have completed this transaction, 86,311, or 60.4%, completed their transition to a REAL ID online. At the end of calendar year 2019, 418,572 people remained eligible to purchase their REAL ID online. These are the 418,000 the SCDMV must first focus on to ensure success of the vision screening portal and the continuation of purchasing a REAL ID online. The SCDMV has already started targeting these customers with a mailer (Appendix F), but there is not data that granular to show out of the people who have received their mailer the number of them who have renewed their license to a REAL ID online. Further, the mailer did not have the character space to fully explain the repercussions of not having a vision screening result on file with the SCDMV come October 1, 2020.

Summary and Recommendations

While the creation of the vision screening portal that electronically submits results to the SCDMV is mandated by Act #220 of 2018, the success of the portal lies on the backs of the SCDMV and eye care professionals. Since the SCDMV has a vested interest in keeping wait times low and transitioning more South Carolinians to interface with the agency electronically versus in person, it seems that there is a greater burden on the agency to ensure its success.

If eye care professionals do not amend their forms to inquire about the expiration date of a patient's driver's license or integrate the question of, "Would you like for me to transmit these results to the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles so you can continue to renew your license online" into their workflow, there is no trigger that would tell an eye care professional to submit the vision results into the portal. For this reason, the SCDMV bears the greater burden in ensuring the portal's success.

Upon measuring the success of the portal, however, there are increased opportunities to expand its capabilities as legislative mandates come to fruition. For example, H. 4698 would require the SCDMV to indicate if vehicle's owner has Tourette's syndrome on the owner's registration card. Further, there is a conversation within the SCDMV and hospitals across the state to ensure people who are deemed mentally or physical unfit to drive by a medical doctor are reported the agency so steps against those people's driver's licenses can be taken if necessary. Pending the success of the vision screening portal, this could be an avenue for other entities to report to the agency if someone should not be behind the wheel. Since the link to SCLLR would already exist to confirm license status, the expanded use of the portal would be a common sense approach to transmitting information.

To be clear, the SCDMV is not interested in knowing the protected health information of South Carolinians. The agency would like to know a "yes" or "no," however, regarding an individual's capacity to drive safely. The details behind that "yes" or "no" are of no use to the SCDMV when affirmed by a licensed health practitioner, and the agency is first to recognize that its employees are not qualified to be making healthcare decisions.

In conclusion, the creation of the vision screening portal to transmit results from eye care professionals to the SCDMV is a step forward in taking advantage of technological

advancements. However, unless mandated into the workflow of eye care professionals, there may be limited success in ensuring the ability to renew licenses online continues. Because the law only mandated the creation of the portal versus the use of the portal, there may be future legislative changes required if the tens of thousands of people who currently renew online are now flooding SCDMV branches to complete their business with the agency.

Glossary

This glossary should not be considered as being fully reflective of all circumstances that may or may not make an individual eligible for certain driving credentials mentioned below.

Beginner's permit – A beginner's permit is issued to South Carolinians who present the proper identity documents and have passed the driving knowledge test. A beginner's permit allows an individual to drive with a licensed adult from sunrise to sunset.

Commercial driver's license – A commercial driver's license is issued to South Carolinians who present the proper identity documents and have passed all required tests, as well as meet minimum age requirements to have full driving privileges, and drive commercial motor vehicles that weigh more than 26,000 pounds.

Commercial learner's permit – A commercial learner's permit is issued to South Carolinians who present proper identity documents have passed all required knowledge tests, as well as meet minimum age requirements, to operate commercial motor vehicles that weigh more than 26,000 pounds. This is given to an individual who qualifies prior to being given a commercial driver's license.

Conditional provisional driver's license – This driver's license is issued to South Carolinians who are between 15 and 16-years-old and have passed all required knowledge and skills test to measure driving aptitude. This license allows an individual to drive without a licensed adult from sunrise to sunset.

Driver's license – A driver's license is issued to South Carolinians who present the proper identity documents and have passed all required tests, as well as meet minimum age requirements to have full driving privileges. A regular, non-commercial driver's license is valid for eight years.

Identification card – An identification card is issued to South Carolinians who presents the proper identity documents but does not have driving privileges. Identification cards are \$15 for people who are 5-to-16-years-old and the first one is free for people who are 17-years-old or older.

Moped operator's license – A moped operator's license is issued to South Carolinians who are at least 15-years-old and present the proper identity documents. This license only allows the operation of a moped versus a private passenger vehicle.

Non-commercial driver's licenses – A non-commercial driver's license is a general group of licenses that refers to cards that do not allow an individual to drive a commercial motor vehicle that weighs more than 26,000 pounds.

Orthorator – An orthorator is the device seen in SCDMV branches that customers use to complete their vision screening when visiting the agency in person. Currently, when a customer is applying for his or her first South Carolina driver's license, he or she must pass the vision screening on the orthorator to be issued a license.

Special restricted driver's license – This driver's license is issued to South Carolinians who are least 16-years-old and have passed all required knowledge and skills test to measure driving aptitude. This license allows an individual to drive without a licensed adult from sunrise to sunset.

Reference

Fiscal Year 2018 – 2019 Accountability Report. <http://scdmvonline.com/About/Agency-Reports>

Appendices

Appendix A
South Carolina General Assembly

122nd Session, 2017-2018

A220, R260, H4672

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. Elliott, B. Newton, Allison, Felder, Bryant, Putnam, Martin, Arrington, Thigpen, Gagnon, Thayer, Douglas, Govan, Anderson, McGinnis, Huggins, Tallon, Daning, D.C. Moss, Long, Henderson, Mace, Cogswell, West, Chumley, Gilliard, Atwater, J.E. Smith, Bernstein, Jefferson, Williams, W. Newton, Henderson-Myers, Ballentine, Bowers, Weeks and M. Rivers

Document Path: l:\council\bill\gt\5406cm18.docx

Introduced in the House on January 24, 2018

Introduced in the Senate on February 28, 2018

Last Amended on April 25, 2018

Passed by the General Assembly on May 1, 2018

Governor's Action: May 18, 2018, Signed

Summary: Driver's licenses, vision screening requirements

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
1/24/2018	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 25)
1/24/2018	House	Referred to Committee on Education and Public Works (House Journal-page 25)
1/24/2018	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Putnam, Martin, Arrington, Thigpen, Gagnon, Thayer, Douglas, Govan
1/30/2018	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: D.C.Moss, Anderson, McGinnis
1/31/2018	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Huggins
2/1/2018	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Tallon
2/6/2018	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Daning, Long, Henderson, Mace, Cogswell, West, Chumley, Gilliard, Atwater, J.E.Smith, Bernstein

2/7/2018 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Jefferson, Williams

2/8/2018 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: W.Newton

2/14/2018 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works**
([House Journal-page 52](#))

2/15/2018 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Henderson-Myers, Ballentine

2/20/2018 House Requests for debate-Rep(s). King, Hart, Yow, Rutherford, Ott, Taylor,
Crosby, Hosey, Kirby, Anderson, Elliott, Clyburn, Crawford, Willis,
Knight, West ([House Journal-page 8](#))

2/21/2018 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Bowers, Weeks

2/27/2018 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: M.Rivers

2/27/2018 House Amended ([House Journal-page 28](#))

2/27/2018 House Read second time ([House Journal-page 28](#))

2/27/2018 House Roll call Yeas-109 Nays-1 ([House Journal-page 31](#))

2/28/2018 House Read third time and sent to Senate ([House Journal-page 17](#))

2/28/2018 Senate Introduced and read first time ([Senate Journal-page 22](#))

2/28/2018 Senate Referred to Committee on **Transportation** ([Senate Journal-page 22](#))

4/18/2018 Senate Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Transportation** ([Senate Journal-page 13](#))

4/25/2018 Senate Committee Amendment Adopted ([Senate Journal-page 33](#))

4/25/2018 Senate Read second time ([Senate Journal-page 33](#))

4/25/2018 Senate Roll call Ayes-42 Nays-0 ([Senate Journal-page 33](#))

4/26/2018 Senate Read third time and returned to House with amendments ([Senate Journal-page 18](#))

5/1/2018 House Concurred in Senate amendment and enrolled ([House Journal-page 51](#))

5/1/2018 House Roll call Yeas-99 Nays-8 ([House Journal-page 52](#))

5/14/2018 Ratified R 260

5/18/2018 Signed By Governor

5/25/2018 Effective date 05/18/18

5/31/2018 Act No. 220

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

[1/24/2018](#)

[2/14/2018](#)

[2/27/2018](#)

[4/18/2018](#)

[4/25/2018](#)

(A220, R260, H4672)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 56-1-220, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE VISION SCREENING REQUIRED FOR ISSUANCE OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE VISION SCREENING IS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN AN INITIAL LICENSE AND UPON RENEWAL OF A LICENSE, TO PROVIDE THAT THE VISION SCREENING MUST BE OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON'S SCREENING MUST BE WAIVED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, AND TO PROVIDE THAT A CERTIFICATE OF VISION EXAMINATION FORM MUST BE EXECUTED BY THE CERTIFYING OPHTHALMOLOGIST OR OPTOMETRIST AND TRANSMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT ELECTRONICALLY.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

Vision screening

SECTION 1. Section 56-1-220(A) and (B) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(A) The department shall require vision screening for all persons obtaining an initial license and upon license renewal. The vision screening must be offered by the department; however, a person's screening must be waived upon the submission of a certificate of vision examination dated within the previous twelve months from an ophthalmologist or optometrist licensed in any state.

(B) The renewal license forms distributed by the department must be designed to contain a certification that the vision of the person screened meets the minimum standards required by the department or have been corrected to meet these requirements. The certification must be executed by the person conducting the screening. A Certificate of Vision Examination form must be executed by the certifying ophthalmologist or optometrist and must be transmitted to the department electronically pursuant to its electronic specifications. The minimum standards of the department shall not require a greater degree of vision than 20/40 corrected in one eye. Persons using bioptic lenses must adhere to the provisions contained in Section 56-1-222.”

Time effective

SECTION 2. This act takes effect October 1, 2020.

Ratified the 14th day of May, 2018.

Approved the 18th day of May, 2018.

Appendix B
South Carolina General Assembly
122nd Session, 2017-2018

A6, R13, H3358

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. Willis, Allison, Collins, Knight, West, Felder and Williams

Document Path: l:\council\bill\gt\5225cm17.docx

Introduced in the House on January 10, 2017

Introduced in the Senate on March 7, 2017

Last Amended on March 22, 2017

Passed by the General Assembly on March 29, 2017

Governor's Action: April 5, 2017, Signed

Summary: Id cards

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
12/15/2016	House	Prefiled
12/15/2016	House	Referred to Committee on Education and Public Works
1/10/2017	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 174)
1/10/2017	House	Referred to Committee on Education and Public Works (House Journal-page 174)
1/12/2017	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Felder
1/20/2017		Scrivener's error corrected
2/9/2017	House	Committee report: Favorable Education and Public Works (House Journal-page 2)
2/13/2017		Scrivener's error corrected
2/14/2017	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Williams
2/14/2017	House	Debate adjourned until Wed., 2-15-17 (House Journal-page 19)
2/16/2017	House	Requests for debate-Rep(s). Willis, Hiott, Clary, Kirby, Anderson, Crosby,

Danning, Bennett, Long, Magnuson, Martin, Sandifer, Whitmire, GR Smith, JE Smith, Clemmons, Weeks, Bradley, Hill, Jefferson ([House Journal-page 29](#))

2/23/2017 House Debate adjourned until Tues., 2-28-17 ([House Journal-page 16](#))
2/28/2017 House Debate adjourned until Wed., 3-1-17 ([House Journal-page 14](#))
3/2/2017 House Amended ([House Journal-page 28](#))
3/2/2017 House Read second time ([House Journal-page 28](#))
3/2/2017 House Roll call Yeas-100 Nays-3 ([House Journal-page 30](#))
3/3/2017 Scrivener's error corrected
3/7/2017 House Read third time and sent to Senate ([House Journal-page 29](#))
3/7/2017 Senate Introduced and read first time ([Senate Journal-page 8](#))
3/7/2017 Senate Referred to Committee on **Transportation** ([Senate Journal-page 8](#))
3/15/2017 Senate Committee report: Favorable **Transportation** ([Senate Journal-page 9](#))
3/22/2017 Senate Amended ([Senate Journal-page 37](#))
3/22/2017 Senate Read second time ([Senate Journal-page 37](#))
3/22/2017 Senate Roll call Ayes-40 Nays-0 ([Senate Journal-page 37](#))
3/23/2017 Senate Read third time and returned to House with amendments ([Senate Journal-page 17](#))
3/29/2017 House Concurred in Senate amendment and enrolled ([House Journal-page 74](#))
3/29/2017 House Roll call Yeas-100 Nays-3 ([House Journal-page 75](#))
4/4/2017 Ratified R 13
4/5/2017 Signed By Governor
4/13/2017 Effective date 4/5/17
4/17/2017 Act No. 6

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

[12/15/2016](#)

[1/20/2017](#)

[2/9/2017](#)

[2/13/2017](#)

[3/2/2017](#)

[3/3/2017](#)

[3/15/2017](#)

[3/22/2017](#)

(A6, R13, H3358)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 56-1-87 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON MAY HOLD ONLY ONE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES-ISSUED CREDENTIAL AT A TIME, TO PROVIDE THAT A REAL ID CARD MAY BE A DRIVER'S LICENSE OR IDENTIFICATION CARD, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE A COMPLIANT OR NONCOMPLIANT CREDENTIAL TO A PERSON WHO PRESENTS CERTAIN DOCUMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT; TO AMEND SECTION 56-1-85, RELATING TO THE STATE'S NONPARTICIPATION IN THE FEDERAL REAL ID ACT, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE SHALL MEET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FEDERAL REAL ID ACT, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES SHALL NOT PROVIDE DIRECT ACCESS TO ITS FULL DRIVER'S LICENSE DATABASE TO ANY OTHER JURISDICTION; TO AMEND SECTION 56-1-90, RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION NECESSARY TO OBTAIN A DRIVER'S LICENSE, SO AS TO REVISE THE CRITERIA THAT MUST BE MET TO PROVE THE EXISTENCE AND VALIDITY OF A PERSON'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER; TO AMEND SECTION 56-1-140, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE, SO AS TO REVISE THE COST AND FREQUENCY OF THE RENEWAL PERIOD FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE, TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE, AND TO ELIMINATE THE FEE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PLACEMENT OF A VETERAN DESIGNATION ON A DRIVER'S LICENSE; TO AMEND SECTION 56-1-210, RELATING TO THE EXPIRATION OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE, SO AS TO REVISE THE EXPIRATION DATE OF A LICENSE ISSUED AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2017, AND TO REVISE THE CRITERIA THAT MUST BE MET BY A PERSON WHO SEEKS TO HAVE HIS LICENSE RENEWED; TO AMEND SECTION 56-1-220, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO VISION SCREENINGS REQUIRED FOR RENEWAL OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE, SO AS TO REVISE THE CRITERIA THAT MUST BE MET BY A PERSON WHO SEEKS TO RENEW HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE; AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES IS AUTHORIZED TO EXPEND A CERTAIN AMOUNT IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FROM ITS CASH BALANCES TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

REAL ID card issuance

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 1, Title 56 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 56-1-87.(A) A person may hold only one Department of Motor Vehicles-issued credential at a time. A REAL ID card may be a driver’s license or identification card, but not both.

(B) The department may issue a compliant or noncompliant card. The department may issue a REAL ID compliant credential only to a person who:

- (1) presents all supporting documents required for a compliant credential; or
- (2) has previously presented proper supporting documents and the department has retained copies of those documents.

(C) The department shall issue a noncompliant credential to a person who opts not to have a REAL ID card, and meets the other requirements necessary to obtain a noncompliant credential.”

REAL ID Act

SECTION 2. Section 56-1-85 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 70 of 2007, is amended to read:

“Section 56-1-85. It is hereby declared to be the policy of this State:

(1) The State is committed to the continuing effort of enhancing the security, authentication, and issuance procedure standards of its drivers’ licenses and identification cards and of meeting all requirements of the Federal REAL ID Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-13) and accompanying regulations.

(2) The department shall enable qualifying citizens to obtain state drivers’ licenses and identification cards that are in compliance with the REAL ID Act.

(3) The department shall not provide direct access to the department’s full driver’s license database to any other jurisdiction.”

Social Security number identification

SECTION 3. Section 56-1-90 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 56-1-90. The Department of Motor Vehicles may require every applicant to submit for identification purposes proof of name, Social Security number, and date and place of birth when applying for a driver’s license. An applicant for a driver’s license, driver’s permit, or special identification card or a renewal thereof may sufficiently prove the existence and validity of his Social Security number, for purposes of Section 14-7-130, by any document considered reliable by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Such a document includes, but is not limited to, an official Social Security card, Social Security check, Social Security form SSA-1099, letter from the Social Security Administration, voter registration card, payroll stub, or Federal W-2 form. The numbers also may be obtained from the Department of Revenue pursuant to Section 12-54-240(B)(7), which

permits the Department of Revenue to submit taxpayer Social Security numbers to the Department of Motor Vehicles and to the State Election Commission.

This section does not prevent issuance of a driver's license or identification card to a foreign exchange student participating in a valid foreign exchange program.”

Driver's license issuance

SECTION 4. Section 56-1-140 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 275 of 2016, is further amended to read:

“Section 56-1-140. (A) Upon payment of a fee of twenty-five dollars for a license that is valid for eight years, the department shall issue to every qualified applicant a driver's license as applied for by law. The license must bear on it a distinguishing number assigned to the licensee, the full name, date of birth, residence address, a brief description and laminated colored photograph of the licensee, any marking otherwise required or in compliance with law, and a facsimile of the signature of the licensee. No license is valid until it has been so signed by the licensee. The license authorizes the licensee to operate only those classifications of vehicles as indicated on the license.

(B) An applicant for a new, renewed, or replacement driver's license may apply to the department to obtain a veteran designation on the front of his driver's license by providing a United States Department of Defense discharge certificate, also known as a DD Form 214, Form 4, that shows a characterization of service, or discharge status of ‘honorable’ or ‘general under honorable conditions’ and establishes the person's qualifying military service in the United States Armed Forces.

The department may determine the appropriate form of the veteran designation on the driver's license authorized pursuant to this section.

(C) The fees collected pursuant to this section must be credited to the Department of Transportation State Non-Federal Aid Highway Fund.”

Driver's license renewal

SECTION 5. Section 56-1-210 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 56-1-210. (A) A license issued or renewed on or after October 1, 2017, expires on the licensee's birth date on the eighth calendar year in which it is issued.

(B) A license is renewable on or before its expiration date upon application and the payment of the required fee.

(C) The department may renew a driver's license of a resident by mail or electronically upon payment of the required fee, if the renewal is a digitized license.

(D) For cause shown, the department may require the submission by the applicant of evidence satisfactory to the department of the applicant's mental and physical fitness to drive and his knowledge of traffic laws and regulations. If the evidence is not satisfactory to the department, the

department may require an examination of the applicant as upon an original application. Parallel parking is not required as a part of the driver's test.

(E) If a person's license expires and he is unable to renew it before its expiration date because he is on active military duty outside this State for a continuous period of at least thirty days immediately before the expiration date or because he is the spouse or dependent living for a continuous period of at least thirty days immediately before the expiration date with a person on active military duty outside this State, within sixty days after returning to this State, the person may renew his license in the manner permitted by this section as though the license had not expired. The department may require proof from the person that he qualifies for renewal of his license under this paragraph. Upon request, the person shall provide the department with a copy of his military service record, a document of his branch of military service showing the date of active military duty outside the State, or other evidence presented by the person showing the dates of service."

Vision screening

SECTION 6. Section 56-1-220 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 275 of 2016, is further amended to read:

"Section 56-1-220. (A) The department shall require vision screening for all persons obtaining an initial license. The vision screening may be waived upon the submission of a certificate of vision examination dated within the previous twelve months from an ophthalmologist or optometrist licensed in any state.

(B) The renewal license forms distributed by the department must be designed to contain a certification that the vision of the person screened meets the minimum standards required by the department or have been corrected to meet these requirements if a screening is required. The certification must be executed by the person conducting the screening. The minimum standards of the department shall not require a greater degree of vision than 20/40 corrected in one eye. Persons using bioptic lenses must adhere to the provisions contained in Section 56-1-222.

(C) A person whose vision is corrected to meet the minimum standards shall have the correction noted on his driver's license by the department.

(D) It is unlawful for a person whose vision requires correction in order to meet the minimum standards of the department to drive a motor vehicle in this State without the use of the correction.

(E) Unless otherwise provided in this section, any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than thirty days."

Department of Motor Vehicles REAL ID expenditure

SECTION 7. The Department of Motor Vehicles is authorized to expend \$1.7 million in the current fiscal year (2016-2017) from its existing cash balances to begin implementing the provisions of this act once it becomes effective.

Time effective

SECTION 8. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 4th day of April, 2017.

Approved the 5th day of April, 2017.

Appendix C

LIC TYPE RENEWAL	FY2016 - MAIL	FY2017 - MAIL	FY2018 - MAIL	FY2019 - MAIL	FY2020 (TO DEC 12,19) - MAIL	FY2016 - WEB	FY2017 - WEB	FY2018 - WEB	FY2019 - WEB	FY2020 (TO DEC 12,19) - WEB	FY2016 - FO	FY2017 - FO	FY2018 - FO	FY2019 - FO	FY2020 (TO DEC 12,19) - FO	TOTAL	
00 - ID	164	255	287	201	652	0	0	0	0	0	0	127,959	128,231	120,471	104,964	44,632	527,816
00 - ID (R)	0	0	16	26	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,216	40,108	18,483	72,915
01 - BP	21	25	32	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	67,289	67,355	49,332	27,098	10,592	221,766
01 - BP (R)	0	0	3	17	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,933	40,852	18,114	77,932
02 - DL	33,905	33,999	29,144	4,060	1,392	0	0	32,852	18,441	5,197	449,321	483,715	358,969	152,902	41,815	1,645,712	
02 - DL (R)	0	0	683	1,178	465	0	0	21,919	33,366	31,026	0	0	109,443	266,084	148,502	612,666	
03 - CBP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,397	1,375	1,424	1,712	821	6,729	
04 - CDL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19,287	19,287	18,502	12,712	3,611	73,399	
04 - CDL (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,035	13,621	6,678	25,334	
06 - MOPED	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	9	2	93	87	146	187	66	597	
06 - MOPED (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	4	0	0	31	78	44	163	
10 - CPDL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	1	0	10	
10 - CPDL (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	49	16	110	
12 - SR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,188	1,187	790	124	88	3,377	
12 - SR (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	421	1,115	660	2,196	
TOTAL LIC RENEWED	34,090	34,281	30,166	5,496	2,596	0	0	54,778	51,819	36,229	666,539	701,237	697,762	661,607	294,122	3,270,722	

NOTE: AS OF DEC 12, 2019

NOTE: COUNT MAIL IN, WEB AND FO RENEWAL TRANSACTIONS



Operational Newsbreak

July 17, 2017 Volume 14, Issue 20

The South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles administers the State's motor vehicle licensing and titling laws by maintaining strict controls to deliver secure and valid identification, licenses, property records, while accurately accounting for the receipt and timely distribution of all revenue collected in order to best serve our citizens.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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- 3 [Title VI](#)

Lion International Plate

The Lions International plate is now available to all South Carolina residents. Proof of membership is no longer required. The plate fee will remain \$30 in addition to the regular registration fee. Form [MV- 95](#) Application for Specialized License Plate has been updated.

Vision Screenings

SC Code Section 56-1-220 was changed during this legislative session. There are certain conditions when a vision screening is no longer required to be administered. Although the law went into effect on July 1st, we had not planned to implement the changes until Phoenix was reprogrammed. Due to customers inquiring about this law change, the following rule changes are now implemented, even though the Phoenix reprogramming has not been completed.

Effective immediately, employees **must NOT test a customer's vision** under these conditions:

- Renewing a non-commercial** driver's license or beginner's permit. *This rule applies even if the credential has expired and also if it is expired more than nine months.*
- Upgrading or downgrading** to a **non-commercial** classification (D, M, E, F, DM, EM, FM)
- Reinstating** a driver's license

Phoenix is being reprogrammed so that employees will not see the vision screening under these conditions. Until those Phoenix updates are made, employees must enter "P" (pass) to issue a credential in the situations listed above.

Exceptions to this rule:

- If a customer requests to have the corrective lens restriction code A removed from his credential then the customer must take the vision test or provide a Form 412-NC or 412-CDL completed by an eye care professional.
- If a customer presents a Form 412-NC dated prior to July 1, 2017 then you must accept that document and enter the results into Phoenix based on what the eye care professional reported.
- ✓ Employees must adhere to what the eye care professional indicates on the Form 412-NC (restrictions, permanent sight impairment, recheck visual fitness) and add the information to Phoenix. Continue to forward a copy of the forms to Driver Improvement if the eye care professional indicated that the customer's visual fitness needs to be rechecked in 2 years or less or there is a medical condition that needs to be monitored.
- ✓ The eye care professional is not to complete Form 412-NC if the customer did not meet the vision standards. However, if an employee notices that the results recorded by the eye care professional does not meet the vision

Employees **MUST continue to administer the vision test** to a customer under these conditions:

- Initial issuance** of a SC driving credential (DL, BP, CDL or CLP)
- All of these **CDL and CLP transactions**: original, renewal, re-exam, and BP to DL. *Always administer the vision test for a CDL customer (Class A, B, C, AM, BM, CM) unless it is for a duplicate or reissue.*
- Surrendering an out-of-state license** to transfer state of record to SC (even if the customer had a SC credential before)

Bioptic Telescopic Lenses

Customers who use bioptic telescopic lenses must never have their vision tested in a branch office. These customers must submit vision screening documentation to Driver Improvement every year (reference [Procedure DI-004](#)). Employees must never renew, issue, upgrade, or downgrade (class D, E or F) credentials for customers who use bioptic telescopic lenses unless Driver Improvement has issued an approval letter to do so.



South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles
Report of Vision Screening for
Non-Commercial Beginner Permits or Driver's Licenses

412-NC
(Rev. 10/17)

FORM IS ONLY VALID FOR 12 MONTHS FROM DATE OF VISION SCREENING

***** This form is void if there are any alterations or erasures on it. *****

Your Name _____	Date of Birth _____	Driver's License Number _____
Your Address _____	City _____	State _____ Zip Code _____
Your Signature _____	Date _____	Telephone Number _____

THIS SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL

***** Do not return this form to an individual requiring corrective lenses until new lenses are fitted. *****

An individual must meet the minimum acceptable vision requirements, without the use of a telescopic lens or other attachment, provided below to obtain and maintain a South Carolina non-commercial driver's license or beginner's permit.

The South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles' minimum visual acuity requirements to operate a non-commercial motor vehicle, with or without corrective lenses, are as follows:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20/70 or better in at least one eye; OR<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ If an individual's weaker eye is worse than 20/200, the stronger eye must read 20/40 or better.• Worse than 20/70 in each eye but 20/70 or better with both eyes together.	

Distant Vision Only	Right Eye	Left Eye	Both Eyes
Without Corrective Lens	20/	20/	20/
With Corrective Lens	20/	20/	20/
New Prescription	20/	20/	20/

The licensed eye care professional is to answer all of the questions below based on the requirements listed above for a non-commercial license.

DO NOT COMPLETE THIS FORM UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL'S VISION MEETS THE ABOVE STANDARDS TO OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE.

SECTION A - DRIVING RESTRICTIONS

1. Is a corrective lens, such as a conventional type spectacle or a contact lens, needed to operate a motor vehicle? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Is the individual's vision worse than 20/200 in one eye? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Should the individual be restricted to daylight driving only? ☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION B - PERMANENT SIGHT IMPAIRMENT

4. a) Does the individual have a permanent sight impairment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- b) If yes, which eye? ☐ Right ☐ Left

SECTION C - RECHECK VISUAL FITNESS

5. Indicate when the individual's eyes should be rechecked to determine visual fitness to operate a motor vehicle.
☐ in 6 months ☐ in 1 year ☐ in 2 years ☐ in 5 years ☐ Other (Comments) _____

Comments: _____

I, _____ Professional No. _____ being licensed to practice

 _____, in the state of _____, certify that

I have performed a vision screening of the eyes of the above named individual. This is a true record of this screening and the individual met the visual acuity standards without the use of a telescopic lens or other attachment. I further certify that I have answered all of the questions above and that he or she signed in my presence.

Signature of Licensed Eye Care Professional _____	Screening Date _____	Telephone Number _____
Business Address _____	City _____	State _____ Zip Code _____

Verify that the individual is not applying for a CDL. Complete SCDMV Form 412-CDL if applying for a CDL.

Henry McMaster
Governor



Kevin A. Shwedo
Executive Director

South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles

Avoid standing in line at the SCDMV

SCDMV records show you may be eligible to buy your REAL ID driver's license at scdmvonline.com.

Beginning October 1, 2020, you must have a REAL ID, with a gold star, to board a domestic, commercial flight, enter a secure federal building, or visit a military installation unless you have a valid US Passport or military ID. Avoid the line and buy your REAL ID license online today.

On and after October 1, 2020, it will become more difficult to purchase your REAL ID license online if you do not have a valid vision screening on file with the SCDMV.

Don't wait until October 2020 to buy your REAL ID license - do so now by visiting www.scdmvonline.com.

Scroll to the bottom of the homepage, click "learn more about REAL ID." On the next page, click the green block that says "Document Check/Buy my REAL ID license" to confirm your eligibility. If eligible, you can buy your REAL ID license with a valid debit or credit card for \$25. The SCDMV will mail your new license to the address on file.